



## **"Challenge and Opportunity"**

State of the State Address

By

Governor John Ashcroft

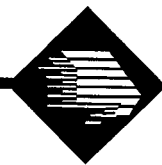
January 15, 1991

Lieutenant Governor, Mr. Speaker, Mr. President Pro Tem, distinguished state officials, members of the 86th General Assembly, my fellow Missourians. Congratulations on the commencement of your new terms of office and especially to your leaders. I look forward to serving the people together.

This morning, I want to discuss proposals for reform — reform and restructuring in our approaches to ethics, education, budgeting, youth services, job training, insurance, oil spill protection, drugs, drunk driving regulation, and other fields.

Let me first offer an additional special congratulations to those of you entering public office for the first time. You join a body of hard-working, conscientious individuals.

The unfortunate irony of electoral victory these days is that in taking office each of us comes to be considered a member of a now suspect class. People notice, for instance, that we even speak our own language. B&P provides



FTEs, E&E, PS, and PSDs for DED out of GR for the FY. We have COLAs no one can drink and programs ranging from C-STAR and ICFMR to the EIERA, which, by the way, has nothing to do with the new proposed farm program, the EIEIO.

All that sounds foreign to most people but it's the everyday vernacular of government. I call it "governacular." It's like any foreign language: when we speak it people know we're in touch with what's going on in the Capitol; when we start thinking in it, we know we're losing touch with real life back home.

How can we wonder at non-voters' withdrawal from a system when 62 percent of them believe it is corrupt, 69 percent think it is controlled by special interests, and 79 percent believe it has lost touch with the people? And how can those attitudes be so prevalent when you and I know that public servants are overwhelmingly as honest, public spirited, and well-intentioned as virtually any group in American society?

I believe that a large part of the problem stems from the people's belief that public institutions are unresponsive to their needs and desires. Citizens wonder if they're in charge when decisions about their daily existence are imposed by life-annointed judges, enacted contrary to candidates' commitments, or standardized in regulations that needlessly infringe personal choices. The people, doubting

their own control, suspect manipulation by special interest groups and self-interested officials who they believe enjoy dabbling with other people's money as they make a living off "working the system."

Actually, almost everyone wants to represent the citizen's interests—the politician, the bureaucrat, the agency, even the PAC or association that he supports. Despite our best intentions, however, the vacuum of competition and accountability in which so much of government operates fosters a type of unresponsive, mutant representation. We don't register a profit or loss, dissatisfied citizens can't carry their business elsewhere, and there's a statistically puny chance of being voted out of office. Who stands accountable for results when no one really even knows the results, only how much was spent?

This strange environment deafens public entities to signals that programs are misdirected or failing. When it comes time to prepare for the perennial query of "What have you done for me lately?" the suggestion of doing better is easily drowned out by special interest clamor for merely spending more. The people lose confidence because programs are out of touch, and we presume they're unhappy because agencies are out of money.

What program has ever been so marginal, miserable, or maladministered that it isn't



asserted as an inevitable godsend if we just pump enough money into it? So we dump in new dollars to paper over serious structural problems in program after program.

Because public institutions won't change, the people think you and I are unconcerned about their interests.

We have entered a year of serious financial challenges. Slower revenue growth is colliding with massive new federal spending mandates to wreck the habitual trend of universal budget increases. That makes this period of challenge a time of special opportunity to reexamine the foundation of public services and the degree of value and accountability that we build into them. The time has come to decide that programs that don't work or don't deliver must be restructured dramatically before they merit additional support — now or in the future.

### Ethics Reform

Before taking aim at the accountability of other glass houses, we should complete the job of putting our own house in order. Last year we worked for creation of an ethics commission of independent citizens to oversee compliance with stronger conflict-of-interest laws and lobbyist regulations. That job remains unfinished. I am grateful for the growing recognition of our need to make it clear that in Missouri we consider public office a place for public service, not private gain.

Missourians will never have reason for confidence in our current enforcement system or any enforcement mechanism in which cabinet officials answer only to other cabinet officials, legislators to other legislators, or bureaucrats to other bureaucrats. Nor is there any chance that Missouri voters will lose interest in making certain that this issue is addressed. We need a truly independent enforcement authority. I pledge to work with you to deal with the enforcement issue and other shortcomings in last year's legislation.

Enforcement also should be strengthened in the area of campaign finance regulation. Accurate and timely disclosure of campaign contributions must be demanded and adequately policed. Beyond the area of enforcement, I would urge you, first and foremost, to beware of amplifying the advantages of incumbency. Of all the special influences that give undue advantage to a candidate, incumbency is the greatest. Attempts to shift campaign costs onto taxpayers, pad public payrolls with additional staff, or restrict campaign spending in a way that increases the advantages of incumbent name recognition — all would be indications of attempts to provide ourselves with a new, but unfair, incumbent protection plan.

The crisis in public confidence in our government results in part from the existing incumbent protection devices. The call for term



limitations sweeping our country and the election results of last fall are proof positive of voter revolt. I support the concept of term limitations. Although I am not endorsing a particular proposal, I believe that we need more, not fewer, new faces in the halls of government. We need a smaller, not a larger, percentage of career politicians representing the people.

In a state of more than 5 million citizens, clearly there is no shortage of people capable of service, and many more of them would be interested if it took fewer years to earn legislative influence. Term limitation is healthy for governors and it would be healthy for other officials, too. Most important, of course, it would be healthy for the state.

### The Challenge and Opportunity of the Budget

The economic handwriting on the wall has made it apparent that next year will be a tight and challenging budget year. To speak of leaner, tighter budgets is, of course, to speak in "governacular." Next fiscal year, like every other year, we will be collecting and spending more than in any year in history.

We will feel less discretion, however, in committing new resources this year than we have in recent years. The effects of national recession on state revenue growth are clear and substantial. Equally clear are the very substantial

mandates issued by Congress that require state spending in a variety of specific areas. These are in addition to the ongoing orders of the federal courts that dictate so much of the spending in our urban schools and our prison system. Basic state general revenue growth will be \$136 million this year. But the 14 new federal mandates for Medicaid and other federal mandates will require state spending of \$112 million over and above last year's appropriations for the affected programs. The federal Congress and courts now effectively tell us how we must spend 35 percent of our total budget and over 80 percent of our new general revenue.

The extent of federal mandates represents a major perversion of representative government. If citizens feel that government too often says, "We don't know you, but we know what is good for you," then they have every right to resent even more this modern mutation of federalism in which Washington seems to say that, "The less likely we are to know you, the more likely we are to know what's good for you."

In order to fund these items, we must adopt the philosophy of zero-based budgeting even if we are not equipped to adopt its formal mechanics. I am recommending that we cut nonessential spending and lower priority activities throughout the budget. I also am recommending specific cuts totaling \$100 million that should be made before we consider

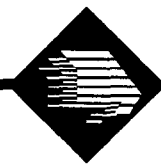
## State of State Address

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### Challenge and Opportunity

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any agency requests for new spending. We will have a net reduction of 467 positions, saving over \$12 million in general revenue.

Every Missouri family has cut things it simply can't afford. We have asked almost every state agency to reexamine staff and equipment costs and cut them by up to 5 percent across the board. We will redirect these funds to federal Medicaid mandates or higher priorities. Missourians all across our state are tightening their belts during this national recession, and state government must do the same.

Some entire programs are slated for elimination. In tight financial times, we cannot afford to subsidize public television, new buildings at local fairs, or extra advertising for Amtrak.

The cuts recommended in other areas will allow us to protect funding for schools and public colleges and universities. Some education appropriation levels will be smaller to reflect withholdings already felt this year, but my budget provides that next year's spending for education will be as high or higher than this year's spending or any previous year's spending for education.

While it is appropriate to acknowledge that some public sector needs may not be met this year, or in other years of economic downturn, we must reject the counsel of those who would

have us raise taxes whenever public budgets feel a shortage. Missouri families know that not all the needs of their personal budgets will be met this year, either. We have lost our bearings if we think that the public purse has to take precedence over the pocketbooks of Missouri families. It is dangerous to believe that every economic downturn provides an excuse for government to run its hand deeper into the family pocket, especially when Missouri's combined individual income taxes and sales taxes are higher than those in most states.

But government may be the only enterprise in which some will tell you that success is measured by what you spend rather than what you save; that it always costs more to do something right than to get it wrong; and that you prove your leadership not by doing better with what you have but by standing still until you get a bigger allowance.

The champions of big spending and their cheerleaders will tell us the case for increases is made by the fact that taxes are higher in forty-some states — and Sweden and Cuba, to boot. Low taxes are as embarrassing to them as serving regular mustard instead of Grey Poupon. I would be more embarrassed if we didn't use Missouri's low cost of living and top ten ranked government efficiency to provide quality services at a much lower cost than most other states. We should be grateful that we do and continue to do our best to keep our taxes low.



I never have said that there is no circumstance in which I would support a tax increase. (Some of you may think that I get up and say that ten times every morning before breakfast.) That has not been my position. When our highways and bridges needed support, I asked you to respond. When the courts ordered refunds for federal retirees, I asked for the necessary temporary taxes. When we needed to reduce the percentage required to approve bond issues, I helped lead the effort. When I tried to raise cigarette taxes for better laboratory equipment and maintenance for our college campuses, somehow the tobacco industry prevailed over the well-being of our college students.

My criteria for the consideration of taxes have been clear: One, there must be a specific need for which there is public support and clear governmental responsibility; two, there must be a sound and specific strategy that promises measurable results; three, there must be clear inability to pursue that strategy with funds that are otherwise available. And fourth, an institution or system should have its house in order before it is entrusted with additional funds or functions. There should be no tax increases for business as usual!

I respectfully but strongly disagree with suggestions heard last week that effective service delivery systems are in place and lack only the funding to make them work. Nor can I agree

with the suggestion that, if we provide the right volume of money, needed reforms will flow spontaneously. Most evidence supports the contrary view that plentiful funds discourage self-examination, while conditioning funds on requirements of reform can be a powerful incentive for improvement.

I believe the rush to raise taxes based on vague or weak promises of reform is simply not the right thing to do — particularly when Missouri workers are being laid off and recessionary winds are blowing. If this reform effort carries over into next year, so be it. The reality of reform is more important than the nervous, election-year perspiration of the politician. You should not rush to raise taxes because it is more convenient to avoid a controversial proposition in an election year.

### Restructuring Services for Children and Families

We have entrusted substantial new federal and state funds to our human service agencies in recent years. The portion of the budget dedicated to services for vulnerable children and so-called “fragile” families has escalated dramatically — an astounding 80 percent increase over just six years ago. Our new expenditures will expand services to more pregnant women, children, and disabled workers and will provide treatment to eligible



children for virtually any health problem identified in a physical examination.

This past November, business, religious, and community leaders at the Governor's Conference on Infant Mortality agreed to support a campaign promoting prenatal care through the provision of coupons redeemable for goods and services for pregnant mothers after they have visited a doctor. I am grateful for the commitment the private sector has demonstrated and am pleased to recommend funds to administer this innovative program.

Eighty cents of every new dollar invested in the Department of Social Services over the past seven years has been for Medicaid programs. Even more startling is the fact that over the last seven years, the Medicaid program has grown 150 percent. By forcing massive expenditures in the Medicaid program, the federal government effectively is dictating spending priorities throughout state government.

Given the colossal costs in our health and human services programs, taxpayers and service consumers demand that real results are achieved for our more vulnerable children and families. Yet, searching for positive changes in the lives of many of these children is very disheartening. Why aren't our expenditures and services having more effect?

One of the reasons is that our service delivery system is failing. We are allowing the dinosaur bureaucracies of state and federal government repeatedly to prescribe ineffective, pat solutions to complex family and community problems.

State and federal rules and regulations dictate rigid routines and uniform actions that cannot be tailored to specific children or a unique family situation. Federal programs rarely promote prevention and do not allow expenditures for services until families are desperate or destitute.

Thoughtful administrators and politicians wonder why the system isn't producing results; and citizens grow disgusted with bureaucratic inefficiency.

Most of us can admit that more of the same will not suffice to make the difference we want to make for children and families. Bold new actions are required if vulnerable children and families are to be given the opportunity to reach the maximum of their God-given potential.

The state systems serving children and their families are in need of fundamental restructuring. Plans for preserving and strengthening families must help empower families, front-line staff, and communities to tailor service packages to fit family needs instead of bureaucratic structures. I am charging a special Cabinet Council with the task of this



restructuring. I have directed them to develop a plan for a new system, including the reorganization of children's services throughout state government into a single agency for children and families. They will utilize the best expertise from state and national leaders. This work will be supported by prominent foundations in Missouri and across the nation. Their report, to be submitted by June 1, will be reviewed by an independent business advisory board composed of executives experienced in restructuring private sector bureaucracies. Implementation of the recommendations will proceed as quickly as possible and will be fully reflected in the budget I propose for 1993.

As the family goes, so goes our state and nation. Families are the most stable unit of society and the best environment for rearing children. The family was the original Department of Social Services. I am convinced that as families flourish in Missouri, we'll observe declines in many of the most pressing challenges facing us today.

### The Challenge of Education Reform

The need for restructuring to achieve results for our young people also is important — most important, in fact — in the field of education. For the last decade, parents and employers have been expressing great concern about the

effectiveness of education in the public schools. In response, between 1982 and 1991 we added \$425 million to our education foundation expenditures, providing a 60 percent increase that significantly exceeds inflation. Enrollment is lower now than in 1982, but our total spending on state aid to public schools has more than doubled.

But there is a continuing crisis in public education, and doubling the money we spend has not solved it. We should improve the equity of foundation formula distributions, but the days of adding substantial new money blindly without targeting specific reforms are better left behind us.

We are, of course, adding some categories of funding and programs for public schools this year. State and federal support of education through the education sales tax, Proposition C, programs for handicapped students, remedial math and reading, adult basic education, and other programs will increase a total of more than \$44 million.

But spending alone cannot be a measure of progress. Results are the only legitimate gauge of our efforts in education.

It's an intellectually bankrupt affront to Missouri students and teachers to use some patchwork spending calculation to portray Missouri education as 48th in the nation. We can match the ability and dedication of our





teachers, and certainly the test scores of our students, against any national average; and I guarantee you we'll come out on top. Our ACT test scores are not 48th; they rank us 12th. Our high school graduation rate is 24th, and our pupil-teacher ratio is 19th in the nation.

There is no way that we ought to spend as much as the high-tax states when our cost of living is lower and our schools provide the fewest number of class days in the country. Our problem isn't that our school spending needs to compete better with New York or New Jersey but that our students need to compete better with those in Japan, Korea, and Germany. It is this growing recognition of the need for results that has driven group after group to recognize the need to restructure our schools if we are to generate the student performance we need.

It is not an attack on educators to recognize that schools, and often their communities, are at differing levels of preparedness to make the hard choices essential to making a real difference in learning and providing additional value for the dollar. This should lead us to find ways to support and encourage school efforts wherever individual schools are ready to move forward and break new ground. Fortunately, good examples are not hard to find.

The Fayette School District in mid-Missouri is looking toward the expansion of its school year to 200 days. And in the St. Louis area, the

Parkway School District is examining a complete overhaul of its education structure to personalize instruction, diminish bureaucratic control, convert students into active learners rather than passive listeners, and grant diplomas for performance instead of for the passage of time.

These school districts are good ones, but they want to be even better. They realize that being one of the best in our state or nation won't be good enough. They want their students to be able to compete with the world.

I'm delighted that Fayette Superintendent Gary Schurz and Parkway Superintendent Don Senti are with us in the gallery today. Gentlemen, would you please stand so that we can recognize you for your vision, leadership, and courage to guide us into the 21st century.

Thank you for being with us today to allow us to applaud your leadership and your commitment to excellence. As Mark Twain said, "Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example."

I want to encourage educators across our state to press forward with this new vision for excellence. I am proposing \$1 million to begin a new venture capital fund for school districts that choose the bold alternative of significant reforms. These funds would be available through competitive grants to support the most promising strategies for improving student learning.



Missouri's good examples will help foster improvement. There is surprisingly widespread agreement about the reforms that are needed in education. Reports from the Missouri State Board of Education and others all stress the importance of redesigning schools so that student learning is the focus. Here are the reforms I believe are essential:

- **More Time on Task** — For three years, I have called for a substantial lengthening of the school year and other measures to assure that more time is spent on teaching and learning.
- **School Report Cards** — Since 1987, I have called for every school to report regularly to parents and taxpayers on performance and improvement of its students and other basic information. This is a reform we can afford.
- **Promotion and Graduation Based Only on Competence** — In 1985, we enacted the Missouri Mastery and Achievement Tests. Their key value is the ability to tell whether individual students are competent in specific skills we have agreed they need. We are past the time that schools should continue promoting and graduating students who haven't achieved the skills and knowledge they will need in life. Let's build on our tests and use them instead of continuing threats to their funding. This is a reform we can afford.
- **Classroom Freedom to Restructure Learning** — A major consensus of the President's National Education Summit a year and a half ago was the need to provide more flexibility for teachers and schools to manage their classroom time and activities. A performance-based system must empower teachers to forge new ways to engage students as active, involved learners, as they are in the Parkway School District. Teachers and schools that take up the challenge and deliver results should be freed from red tape and over-regulation. This is a reform we can afford.
- **Let Students and Parents Choose Their Schools** — Since 1989, I have said that Missouri should look to other states and localities that are responding to individual needs and engendering more family involvement by bringing down barriers to school choice. I look forward to a signal of your readiness to work seriously together on this issue. This is a reform we can afford.
- **Let Experienced Professionals Become Teachers Without Bureaucratic Certification Requirements** — For two years, I have encouraged the State Board of Education to offer broader alternatives to teacher certification. I am grateful for their beginning steps in this direction, but they need your specific statutory endorsement. Experiences



in New Jersey show us that opening the doors for professionals to shift to careers in education brings capable, caring teachers, particularly in math and science. They have higher teacher test scores than those with conventional teaching certificates and include many minority citizens who bring new skills. And this, too, is a reform we can afford.

We need to put away the big guns for taxes until we pull the trigger on reform. Of the essential reforms I've just listed, all but one — more time in school — can be afforded within budget growth in normal economic times. If we can agree that these reforms will be enacted, I'll gladly talk with you about how to pay for them.

Our public schools are in need of restructuring, but at least that need is widely recognized and increasingly supported by education leaders. The need for reform in higher education is virtually as great, but college campuses throughout America remain much more complacent about educational productivity.

Every year a larger number of grade schools and high schools can tell us what skills and knowledge their graduates should have and the extent of their actual achievement. The general culture of college campuses still rejects not only the feasibility but the very legitimacy of measuring achievement.

Neither students nor taxpayers have a valid basis to select or support an institution that sells itself with everything except the essential facts. This failure to account for results in student learning also contributes to the de-emphasis and deterioration of undergraduate teaching and learning.

In 1989, I charged our colleges and universities to meet specific challenges in six areas. I asked our schools to refine institutional missions, strengthen performance by increasing learning and graduation rates, improve teacher education, make a strong commitment to access for all, cut administrative costs, and develop funding mechanisms that will reward performance.

These challenges must be met if our colleges are to demonstrate to the public that the investment in higher education is producing concrete results.

I am grateful to those leaders on Missouri's campuses who have been working to meet these challenges and develop a new culture of quality. They know of my view that new funding should be distributed based on standards of performance and accountability. The ordinary "cost-plus" approach to college budgeting promotes pursuit of enrollment rates unrelated to graduation rates and increased faculty unrelated to class loads. The result has been a 97 percent state funding increase since 1982 for



four-year colleges and universities that some claim to be in worse shape than ever.

Those who say Missouri funding can create only deterioration should look around them.

The University of Missouri-Rolla is among the national leaders in engineering. In 1990, *U.S. News & World Report*, *Barron's*, and *Money Magazine* included UMR on their lists of the nation's best colleges. UMR students have an average enhanced ACT score of 26.3, compared to the national average of just over 20.

Need another example? According to *U.S. News & World Report*, Northeast Missouri State University in Kirksville is one of the 5 most innovative colleges in the country and the best buy of any Midwest regional college or university. *Barron's* and *Peterson's Guide to Selected Colleges and Universities* also rank Northeast among the top schools in the nation.

In addition to measures I mentioned earlier, steps essential to reform in higher education include:

- Broad and binding new authority for the coordinating board to manage institutional mission and program development, settle turf wars, and limit bureaucracy and wasteful program duplication;
- Full assessment of student learning on every campus. This could have been achieved by now if the 1987 budget recommendation of

\$2.7 million for the effort had been approved;

- A requirement that a fixed and significant minimum, not maximum, percentage of new funding be distributed through the coordinating board on the basis of results in student learning and other performance measures.

Only when and if we can agree that these education reforms will be enacted should there be talk about the funding needed to support them.

### Economic Development and Consumer Protection

Re-conditioning our schools and colleges is a paramount priority, but it is not a sufficient bulwark to meet our immediate economic challenges. More than eighty percent of the work force in our economy all the way to the year 2000 will consist of workers already now on the job. As our defense industry workers know all too well, our first priority should be to keep them working.

New tax burdens on hard-pressed workers or employers struggling to meet their payrolls aren't likely to help the economy. We should provide more incentives and support to encourage employers to provide training for improved and diversified workers' skills.



To support that goal, I recommend that we abolish the existing Job Training Coordinating Council in favor of a new state Training and Employment Council that would allocate job training funds in keeping with a coordinated employment and training policy. I also recommend \$1 million to establish the Missouri Youth Service and Conservation Corps that will provide education and work programs for high-risk youth and \$10.7 million in new funding for our Learnfare/FUTURES program to move families from welfare to work.

The route to Missouri's future development must be paved with roads and highways. Our highway improvement plan approved by the voters has brought progress as promised by coming in 50 percent ahead of schedule and 50 percent under budget. Rapid growth in some areas of the state continues to outpace our work, but in the face of the uncertainties in the Persian Gulf and the need for our Congressional delegation to obtain a more equitable percentage of available federal highway funds, it is premature to consider additional highway funding. Until we know the content of the federal highway bill next fall — and whether Missouri gets its fair share of gas taxes back from Washington — changes would be ill-advised.

Some needs that might not be addressed adequately by Proposition A could be met wisely

and fairly by a constitutional amendment allowing the use of tolls enabling individual communities and users to finance the new projects they believe they need.

We are grateful for the strong year in a significant part of our economy — agriculture. We must be careful to protect the extraordinary resource we have in Missouri farmers.

Missouri needs to enact powerful tools for the new Department of Insurance to improve our regulation and supervision of the insurance industry. We need to require annual audits of all companies, restrict their investment in junk bonds, update our unfair practices act, and give the department the ability to supervise troubled companies quickly, as I proposed last year. I am grateful for the interest now being shown by both the Senate and the House in protecting Missouri consumers.

Two years ago, I proposed legislation that would mandate federal insurance for Missouri's credit unions. For the sake of Missouri families, let's move forward with that proposal this year.

### Protecting the Environment

This year, we renew our commitment to the environment — to ensure safe and adequate drinking water supplies, reduce waste, improve our air quality, safeguard soil, and improve recreational opportunities for all Missourians.



In the process, we must try to direct financial responsibility and accountability to those who consume the resources. In so doing, we will ensure greater equity in funding and make users more sensitive to the consequences of their actions.

I'm pleased to recommend private market user fees to implement your landmark solid waste management legislation. As we seek to reduce solid waste going to our landfills by 40 percent, this system will help us understand that when we create trash, we must pay its full cost.

During the past two years, millions of gallons of petroleum products have leaked or spilled into Missouri streams, lakes, and rivers, elevating our risk of drinking water contamination. To protect our environment, I am proposing a ten-point program of petroleum pipeline regulation, protection, and safety.

Last November, the people spoke in a resounding voice. Missourians love their land and environment, but they don't want burgeoning bureaucracies to dictate to them things they can do for themselves. I am recommending additional resources for the voluntary "Streams for the Future" program to assist private landowners with stream corridor preservation and management.

## Reforming Drug Enforcement and DWI Laws

One of the perennial concerns of Missourians and all Americans is the persistent problem of illegal drugs. Last year, we made significant progress in our drug prevention and treatment efforts, and statistics show that our message of "MO Says No" is getting results. But despite the hard work of sponsors and supporters in each chamber, we fell short on efforts to protect innocent Missourians from this menacing scourge.

Our drug proposal also includes full search and seizure authority for our Highway Patrol, tougher penalties for involvement in criminal street gangs, stronger penalties for repeat marijuana convictions, new weapons to fight money laundering operations, and the classification of anabolic steroids as a controlled substance. In addition, I believe Missouri should take advantage of an innovative tool to claim the money and possessions of drug dealers. A drug stamp tax would give prosecutors an additional weapon with which to fight the war on drugs.

This is the time of the year that we honor Martin Luther King, who dreamed of a day when racial barriers would be broken and opportunities opened for all Americans. We've made great strides, but examination of our laws on deadly drugs reminds us that middle- and



upper-class casual users remain immune from prosecution and penalty while dope dealers and drug thugs in our inner cities are rounded up. This year, I renew my call to revoke or deny driving privileges, professional licenses, public scholarships, and public housing to those convicted of selling or possessing illegal drugs.

The absence of equity exists not only in relation to illegal drugs, but in laws pertaining to legal substances as well. Statistics indicate that nearly every hour, someone in our state is killed or injured by a drunk driver. For the average Missourian, a DWI is a serious matter. But for an individual with contacts, money, or knowledge of the system, a quick phone call to an eager lawyer too easily takes care of the issue.

I believe we should lower the blood-alcohol requirement for criminal conviction and administrative revocation to at least .08 percent. Let's close the loopholes. Let's send a clear message about drinking, driving, and open containers. Let's do our job to ensure that drunken driving is absolutely abhorred and universally punished.

### Protecting Innocent Life

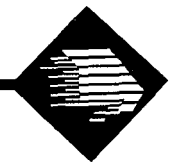
Increasingly, issues confronted at the state level extend beyond matters of dollars and cents to the ultimate decisions of life and death.

Advances in science and technology are placing us in ethical dilemmas never before possible or even imagined. On issues such as these, we must continue to remember the words engraved in our Senate chamber, "nothing is politically right that is morally wrong."

My concern for protecting our innocent unborn children is well known and unchanged. I urge you to act this year and will welcome the opportunity to sign into law reasonable legislation that moves Missouri forward in our effort to protect the lives of the unborn.

The trend toward valuing our existence in terms of "quality of life" is tremendously disturbing to me. Human life is inherently valuable, and we should not give up on it easily. That's why I resist the notion that the state should automatically empower one person to decide for another when an innocent life should end. It's an extremely difficult and unfortunate issue; but when in doubt, I believe we must choose life.

I support Missouri state law, which has been affirmed by the highest court in the land. Clear and convincing evidence of the considered intentions of those unable to speak for themselves must be found before medical treatment may be terminated. I encourage all Missourians to consider preparing a living will that clearly delineates their desires.



### Recognizing Missourians in the Persian Gulf

The issues we confront are emotional and complex. They bring to us challenge and opportunity. This has been referred to as a year of crisis — a crisis in households hit by the downturn in the national economy and the serious crisis of confidence in the public institutions of our country easily detected in November's election results.

But on this day, the collective attention of Missourians and all Americans is riveted on a crisis of a different kind. As we lay out our vision for the future, thousands of our friends, neighbors, and loved ones at any moment might be laying down their lives in service to their country.

While I fervently pray that this conflict can be resolved without war, I also pray that we never will lose the will to fight for the grandest of all ideals, which is liberty. The presence of Missourians in the Persian Gulf does not glorify the inhumanity found in war. Rather, it signifies the responsibility found in freedom.

Our actions in this building make a difference, affecting the lives of many. But nothing we do or say will match the courage and devotion demonstrated by our Missouri sons and daughters serving in the Middle East.

It is an honor to have in this chamber today family and military representatives of those serving in the Middle East. They include Mrs. Jane Sipes, wife of Tech Sergeant Kelly G. Sipes, who currently is serving in the Persian Gulf; also with us are Reserve Sergeant Steven Norris, Captain James Beesley, and Missouri Army National Guard Sergeant First Class Charles Hitz, who all will be deployed to Operation Desert Shield shortly.

Would you please stand so we can recognize you and thank you for your service during these difficult hours. Thank you. May God bless our state and God bless America.